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A modern interior space featuring large windows with white anodised aluminium louvres. A large white spherical pendant light hangs from the ceiling. The room is furnished with a dark brown sectional sofa, a round black coffee table, and two black leather armchairs with orange leather straps. A large orange cushion is on the floor. The space opens up to a terrace with a wooden deck and a tree. A minimalist abstract painting is on the wall.

Large-format glazing, with anodised aluminium louvres to control the light and ventilation throughout the house, maintains a strong visual connection between inside and outdoors →

into the light

THE ART OF RESCUING AN OLD TERRACE SHROUDED IN GLOOM AND MADE UP OF STACKED, PACKED, TINY ROOMS PROVED QUITE ILLUMINATING

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The staircase is the go-between for the classic front and the modern treatment at the rear of the home of Peter Raymond (opposite page). Dining table and chairs, sofa, pouf, armchairs and coffee table from Format. Rug and outdoor chairs from Corporate Culture. Pendant light from Spence & Lyda. Artwork by David Hutton.

Varying the ceiling height helped break up harsh architectural lines and visually delineate one area from another without the need for the customary walls and doors

A classic scenario: neglected inner-Sydney terrace urgently in need of modernising but with the potential to be a handsome home in an enviable location. The question was, where to start? And what style to go with? The home, which is single-storey at the front, dropping away to triple-storey at the back, had been in Peter Raymond’s family for more than 50 years and was in a pretty terrible state. He turned to architects for help. “What I wanted most was for the architects to re-engineer the house for the 21st century,” says Peter of the terrace he shares with his wife, Effie.

The new design has preserved the facade and made the most of the narrow site. “The outcome is a very creative space and nice house to be in – it’s hard to drag myself out in the morning to go to work!” exclaims Peter, with undisguised pride.

connecting spaces, flooding light

“One of the biggest complications was to overcome the darkness throughout,” says Matt Krusin, leading architect and associate director from Tobias Partners. Exterior, motorised, anodised aluminium louvres and extensive use of glass became a design priority for the treatment of the facade. The new design enables spaces to be opened up and connected, filtering light and enabling cross ventilation throughout the renovated home. The double-height living space has a visual and physical connection to the adjoining courtyard, mainly due to the application of the same floor finish of large-format grey tiles extending out from the living room.

stairway to heaven

The experience of walking down the stairway and into the new volume creates a sense of drama where, “all of a sudden, the staircase drops and the entire new space opens up in front of you,” says Matt. The idea was to maintain the classic architectural integrity of the entrance to the house, but surprise with bright, streamlined elements that open up as your descend the steps. “Although the corridor itself is dark, the opportunity to look past and along the oak staircase and see a light-filled room alters your perception,” says Matt of the solution he came up with for the renovation.

eastern inspiration

With its blackbutt cladding, walls of glass, crushed white gravel and focal-point tree, the internal courtyard draws inspiration from Japanese gardens. While creating a beautifully serene element, it also adds light to the core of the interiors and allows extra ventilation. Matt chose simple materials so the internal courtyard space remained in tune with the rest of the home. “We were looking at a consistency in materials, rather than too much confusion,” he explains.

volume control

Through playing with space, Matt has ensured that almost every room has an attractive view. This design feature also allowed him to achieve extra natural light and create a visual cross-link from many areas. “The volumes allowed us to open everything up, while →





also maintaining overhangs and sun protection,” Matt says. “With this design element, we got into the key spaces, ensuring that none of them felt dark.” Creating a smooth link from one room to another also dictated the restrained use of finishes – maintaining an elegantly pared-back look. “Keeping the simple palette in each volume was important, rather than confusing things with too many finishes. We wanted to make the house feel as fluid as possible.”

double-duty joinery

Double-height joinery in the sleek, grey kitchen takes advantage of otherwise-wasted vertical space. “The whole element arose from the client being a real collector of stuff!” exclaims Matt. “We suggested incorporating a unit that would create a very well-functioning kitchen at the room level, with ladder access to more storage up above.” On the horizontal plane, the kitchen zone utilises valuable corridor space, while acting as a structural divide between the adjoining living and dining spaces.

stacking it all up

In an attempt to make the most of an extremely narrow site, Matt designed sleeping and bathing quarters so each room interconnected. The three spaces – bedroom, ensuite and wardrobe – are stacked one behind the other. A bedhead wall acts as a structural divide for the walk-in robe. And beyond that, is the bathroom.

bathroom zones

The master bathroom embraces the grey tones that can be found throughout, as well as the stone tiles that are featured in the living space and the courtyard. “The bathroom space we had to work with wasn’t very generous and was dictated by the size of the rooms next to it, so we had to be pragmatic and keep it neutral,” explains Matt. Functionally, the room is divided into two zones – wet and dry – which are separated by a barely visible glass panel. The glass divides the room while giving the appearance of one unified space. ♣
Tobias Partners, Paddington NSW, (02) 9361 4800, www.tobiaspartners.com.



A neutral scheme was chosen for most surfaces to underscore the impact of the handsome accent colour used throughout

The introduction of dark colour adds dynamism to the scheme. **Bedroom:** Stool/ bedside table from Chee Soon & Fitzgerald. Herringbone cushion and framed butterfly from Becker Minty. Grey cushion, throw and book from Koskela. Pillowcase, ceramic pot and scarf (over end of bed) from Planet Commonwealth. **Bathroom:** Stool from Chee Soon & Fitzgerald. Towel and hand towel from Planet Commonwealth. Beaker from Koskela. Soap, dish and foaming bath liquid all from Studio Imports. **Kitchen:** Oak serving board and grey bowl from Chee Soon & Fitzgerald. Salt-glazed bowl (middle shelf) and Jane Robertson vessels (beside sink) from Planet Commonwealth. Ceramic dish (left of sink) and hand towel from Macleay On Manning. Sharon Muir ceramic pot (bottom shelf) from Koskela. **ADDRESS BOOK** page 165